

Research and Evaluation



Photo: FHI 360

The **LEGO Playful Parenting Implementation Research** is a five-year research award studying five playful parenting interventions in Bhutan, Guatemala, Rwanda, Serbia, and Zambia. The project is helping define ‘what works’ for effective scaling of playful parenting interventions and what impact these interventions have on caregivers, service providers and children.

With particular attention to the LEGO Foundation’s Learning through Play (LtP) philosophy, the implementation research harmonizes data collection efforts across programs and partners to distill findings for the larger early childhood development community.



As a science-driven organization, FHI 360 is committed to a continuous process of learning and knowledge sharing for improved solutions in education around the world. Our research, monitoring and evaluation specialists conduct studies and evaluations that contribute to the evidence base on the effectiveness of educational interventions in a wide variety of contexts, with particular focus on **teaching and learning, building and adapting measurement tools, education in emergencies, capacity building, and learning through play (LtP)**.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching and learning, especially in the early grades, provides children and their families with the foundational skills needed to improve their lives and communities. Understanding how kids learn and what interventions are most effective at improving learning outcomes—with the least cost, and at scale—are critical issues that FHI 360 evaluators and researchers work to address. We currently implement large-scale early learning interventions in **Djibouti, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), El Salvador, Liberia, Madagascar, Morocco, Nigeria, and Rwanda**. We use early grade reading, writing and mathematics assessments, highly structured classroom observation tools, and qualitative methods to measure fidelity of implementation, time on task, teacher behavior change, student learning and community support for education. Continuous data collection for monitoring purposes is integrated into online visualization dashboards, allowing project teams and local stakeholders access to rapid real-time information from schools on their attendance, teacher observation and learning outcomes data.

BUILDING & ADAPTING MEASUREMENT TOOLS

We design and test measurement tools to conduct rigorous research, embedding validation processes into program activities. In **Guatemala** and **Uganda**, we developed and validated our YouthPower Action Youth Soft Skills Assessment (YAYSSA), later adapting the tool for programs in Senegal and DRC via translation, cognitive interviews, and piloting.

In addition to designing tools, we employ leading validated measures and adapt them for diverse contexts, such as the International Development & Early Learning Assessment (IDELA) in **Rwanda** and International Social & Emotional Learning Assessment (ISELA) in **Rwanda** and **DRC**.

We also apply a wide repertoire of early childhood education (ECE) measures featuring early learning modules, including Ages & Stages (ASQ) in **Serbia** and Malawi Development Assessment Tool (MDAT) in **Rwanda** and **Zambia**. FHI 360 was one of the first organizations to adapt and apply the World Health Organization’s (WHO’s) recently launched Global Scale for Early Development (GSED), a holistic measure to track children’s development, in **Bhutan**.

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES (EiE)

We drive research and learning agendas to guide adaptive programming and contextualize interventions for fragile settings. In southern **Senegal**, our evaluation of a remediation pilot found the program boosted math gains but not reading, thus informing curriculum revision for scale up. In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, we recently led a *Rapid Education Risk Analysis (RERA)* for which we piloted innovative methods including participatory interviewing techniques with children using images and poster boards.

We evaluate social emotional learning interventions across EiE contexts including **Senegal**, as well as **northeast Nigeria**, where we conducted a cluster-randomized controlled trial to test the efficacy of delivering SEL content as a standalone lesson vs. infused with core reading and math lessons.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Data systems strengthening represents a cornerstone of our work. Through formal capacity building workshops and continued technical assistance, we drive local ownership and system uptake of data and evidence. In our workshops with the Ministry of Educations (MOEs) in **Madagascar** and **Djibouti**, we trained government evaluation and IT staff in evaluation design, sampling, data cleaning, analysis, and visualizations. In **Nigeria**, we trained MOE staff to program mobile data collection tools, setup and maintain data collection/management hardware, and generate reports through dashboards, as part of the state and local Data Hub teams. More recently, we applied FHI 360's systems assessment framework in **Liberia & Rwanda** to identify opportunities for capacity building across four interrelated components: people, process, technology, & the enabling environment.

We also build capacity within research & analysis, leading several virtual sessions with analysts from the People's Action Learning (PAL) Network to strengthen skills in equity analysis, statistics, and data management in education.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY (LTP)

Since 2020, FHI 360 has partnered with the LEGO Foundation (LF) on several research awards to generate robust evidence on learning through play (LTP). As the research and learning partner to LF's Playful Parenting partners, our implementation research scaffolds playful parenting interventions to inform scale-up. In 2021, we conducted a systematic review of LTP during COVID-19, generating insights into existing evidence on how play is used to promote learning during the pandemic. More recently, FHI 360 developed and piloted Teacher RePlay, a formative measurement toolkit to support teachers in integrating playful activities into their classrooms through self-assessment and self-reflection.

About FHI 360: FHI 360 is a global organization that mobilizes research, resources and relationships so people everywhere have access to the opportunities they need to lead full and healthy lives. With collaborations in over 60 countries, we work directly with local leaders to advance social and economic equity, improve health and well-being, respond to humanitarian crises and strengthen community resilience. We share data-driven insights and scalable tools that expand access and equity so communities can effectively address complex challenges, respond to shocks and achieve thriving futures.

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Mahay Mamaky Teny – Madagascar

In Madagascar, our experimental, longitudinal research on the Mahay Mamaky Teny early grade reading project tracked 1,584 students throughout the school year and found gains in student reading skills after only three months of the intervention. The study generated evidence critical to propelling national scale-up of the program by the Ministry of Education. More recently, we found that students in classrooms where teachers followed the scripted lessons provided by the program performed significantly higher than students in classrooms where teachers did not. Learn more about the research [here](#). Building on this work, FHI 360 continues to partner closely with the Ministry of Education in Madagascar under USAID-funded [LOVA](#), a primary-school foundational skills intervention.

Teacher RePlay

Through *Play & Learning in Children's Eyes (PALICE)* FHI 360 led an international consortium of partners under the Lego Foundation to develop a toolkit supporting teachers to engage in LTP in the classroom called *Teacher RePlay*. Grounded in two years of formative research, the toolkit was piloted with over 350 teachers in Bangladesh, Colombia, and Uganda, and is available in three languages. Teacher RePlay offers teachers a self-driven set of tools, tested on constructs and usability, to assess and reflect on their LTP practice.

The toolkit is available online and will soon be accompanied by a Master Training, administered as an in-person training or a self-paced, online course, to promote teachers' continued use of the toolkit.